

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Kirk Eby, Planner III, Planning and Code Administration

**FROM:** Brittany Marinello, Housing & Community Development Manager

**DATE:** October 9, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Comments to Proposed Changes to Spectrum

Although there has been an increase in young professionals relocating to Gaithersburg due to the biotech and science industry, this does not negate the need for more senior housing. As outlined in the recently adopted Housing Element, an equity & social justice goal is to “ensure the availability and consideration of needs for senior housing and housing for individuals with disabilities”<sup>1</sup> There is an expected wave of retirement for those born between 1959 and 1965. The proposed changes to the Spectrum-Magnolia plan directly addresses the need for senior housing.

Those entering retirement will need housing that is affordable and accommodating to their needs which can be addressed with an age restricted community. Age restriction does not equate to a continuum of care model.<sup>2</sup> Although there may be affordability issues with a continuum of care model, this proposed age restricted community does not offer those same services, which make continuum of care units unaffordable to many.

### **Multi-generational Housing Model**

While the Housing Division agrees that there needs to be more housing to accommodate multi-generational households, it should be noted that multi-generational housing refers to a communal style of living for several generations within one household.

The proposal states that the multigenerational housing at Spectrum-Magnolia will benefit “healthy active” seniors who are in the “slow down phase” and draw highly educated newcomers. The proposal further asserts that the multi-generational communities is a changing preference and promotes a more diverse community.

There appears to be some confusion throughout regarding the definition of “multi-generational housing”. The multi-generational model is encouraged to address the rising cost of housing, lack of retirement savings for older residents, health concerns, and overall affordability for older adults and young families. It is becoming more common that families are living in multigenerational housing arrangements.<sup>3</sup> This living arrangement is a choice from the family, not a housing model that is implemented by developers and code/regulations.

If there is a desire to encourage more communal housing arrangements, then there should be a more concerted effort to provide more 3- and 4- bedroom housing. Based on the proposal, Spectrum-Magnolia will be “a mix of studios, one-bedroom, one-bedroom dens, and two-bedroom units.” This is not sufficient to accommodate for multi-generational housing.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Gaithersburg Housing Element, pg 107

<sup>2</sup> Continuum of Care Model refers to the adaptive level of services a person may need based on their evolving circumstances (i.e. aging or mental health).

<sup>3</sup> [Expanding Multigenerational Housing Options | HUD USER](#)